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The University of Montana

NEWS RELEASE

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April 28, 1995

UM ATHLETICS DEPARTMENT BEGINS NCAA CERTIFICATION PROCEEDINGS

MISSOULA--

The University of Montana-Missoula's athletics department has begun a yearlong self-study program to determine whether UM meets accreditation standards for the National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I athletics certification program.

The UM study was officially launched by an orientation visit from NCAA representative Garnett Purnell two weeks ago, said UM Associate Provost James Lopach.

The four areas the accreditation study covers are academic integrity, financial integrity, rules compliance and commitment to equity. NCAA members are evaluated on how well they meet specified standards in each area, as well as how the activities of the athletics program relate to the mission and purpose of the institution.

This is the first program to focus solely on certification of athletic programs, according to the NCAA. All NCAA Division I schools will participate in the certification program, Lopach said.

Once the University has completed its study, an external team of reviewers will conduct a three- or four-day evaluation of the campus and report to the NCAA Committee on Athletics Certification. The NCAA committee will then determine UM's certification status: certified, certified with conditions or not certified.

Colleges and universities that fail to meet certification standards may be placed under

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sanctions. Institutions that do not correct problems revealed by the study may be ruled ineligible for NCAA championships.

Lopach said UM's certification standing should be announced sometime between mid-April and mid-May of 1996.

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